

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated May 19, 2004, having a shortened statutory period set to expire August 19, 2004. In the present Amendment, Claims 1-6 and 26-33 are canceled, and amendments to Claim 8 are proposed. Because the proposed amendments to Claim 8 merely rewrite that claim in independent form, the proposed amendments do not raise any new issues that would require further search and necessarily reduce the number of outstanding issues. Therefore, the amendments to Claim 8 are believed to be proper after final rejection, and their entry is respectfully requested.

In paragraph 2 of the present Office Action, Claims 32-33 are objected to as containing informalities. This objection is rendered moot by the cancellation of Claims 32-33 herein.

In paragraph 4 of the present Office Action, Claims 1-2, 4-6 8-9, 10-11, 14-15, 18, 21 and 24-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. US 6,611,860 to *Ying* in view of JP 404096541 to *Chiba*. In addition, in paragraph 5 of the present Office Action, Claims 3 and 12 are rejected under *Ying* and *Chiba* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,481,750 to *Parise et al. (Parise)*. Those rejections are respectfully traversed, and favorable reconsideration of the pending claims is requested.

Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of *Ying* and *Chiba* does not render the present claims unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103 because that combination does not teach or suggest each feature of the present claims. For example, with respect to exemplary Claim 9, the combination of *Ying* and *Chiba* does not teach or suggest:

in response to receipt of the session request, each of the plurality of slave computer systems changing from a receive mode to an answer mode in which all of plurality of slave computer systems are in communication with the master computer system via the common communication channel;

the plurality of slave computer systems thereafter receiving ... a second request ...;

in response to the second request, the particular slave computer system maintaining communication with the master computer system in the answer mode and each other slave computer system not identified by the ... second request disconnecting from communication with the master computer system and returning to the receive mode. (emphasis supplied)

Specifically, the combination of cited references does not teach or suggest slave computer system(s) changing modes in response to the second request by "disconnecting from communication with the master computer system and returning [from the answer mode in which all of plurality of slave computer systems are in communication with the master computer system] to the receive mode," as recited in exemplary Claim 9.

With respect to the above-cited feature of exemplary Claim 9, the present Office Action cites col. 10, lines 1-18 of *Ying*. As pointed out by the Examiner at page 3 of the present Office Action, the cited passage discloses "the master node polling each of the slave[] nodes periodically, where each of the slaves ha[s] a unique node identification number" and "only reacts if it recognizes its own identification number or address in the control message." Thus, *Ying* clearly teaches communication between the master node and slave nodes one-at-a-time. *Ying* does not disclose any "second request" to which a slave computer system in joint communication with the master computer system together with one or more other slave computer systems "drops out" from the joint communication and returns from the answer mode to the receive node.

*Chiba*, taken in combination with *Ying*, similarly does not teach or suggest the claimed response to the second request by one or more slave computer systems not identified within the second request. That is, *Chiba* does not teach or suggest a slave computer system in communication with the master computer system returning from the answer mode to the receive mode in response to a second request in which the slave system is not identified.

Because the cited combination of *Ying* and *Chiba* does not teach or suggest each feature recited in exemplary Claim 9, similar Claims 8, 10, 18, and their respective dependent claims unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Having now responded to each objection and rejection set forth in the present Office Action, Applicant believes all pending claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests such allowance.

No additional fee is believed to be required; however, in the event any additional fees are required, please charge IBM CORPORATION Deposit Account No. 50-0563.

Respectfully submitted,



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